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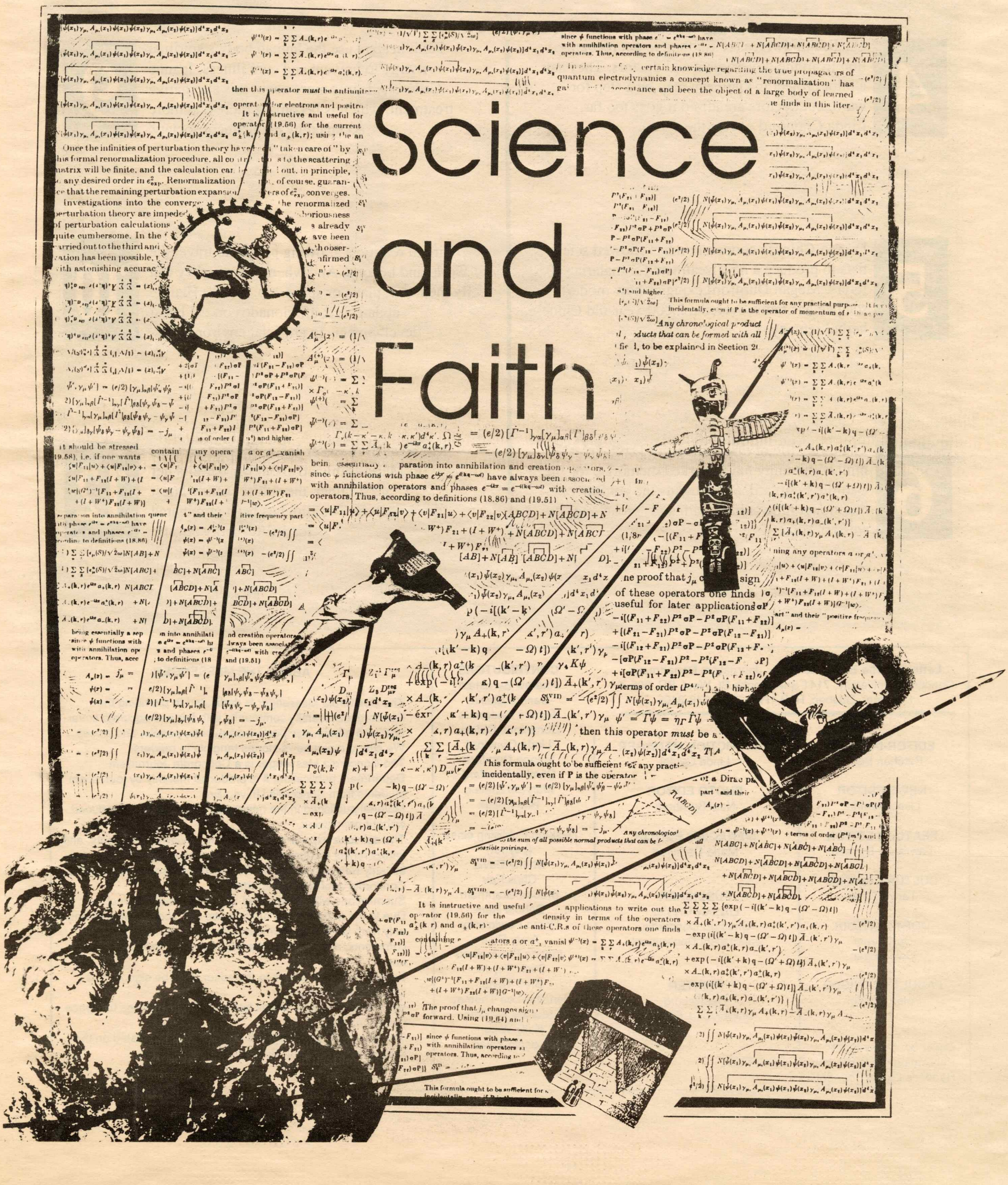
Science and Faith



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ABOUT THE MESSENGER

The Concordia Messenger is dedicated to providing the Concordia University community with fair and accurate coverage, and a fresh perspective on events, people, and issues. We aim to make news stories tangible to readers.

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Submissions will be accepted in English and in French.

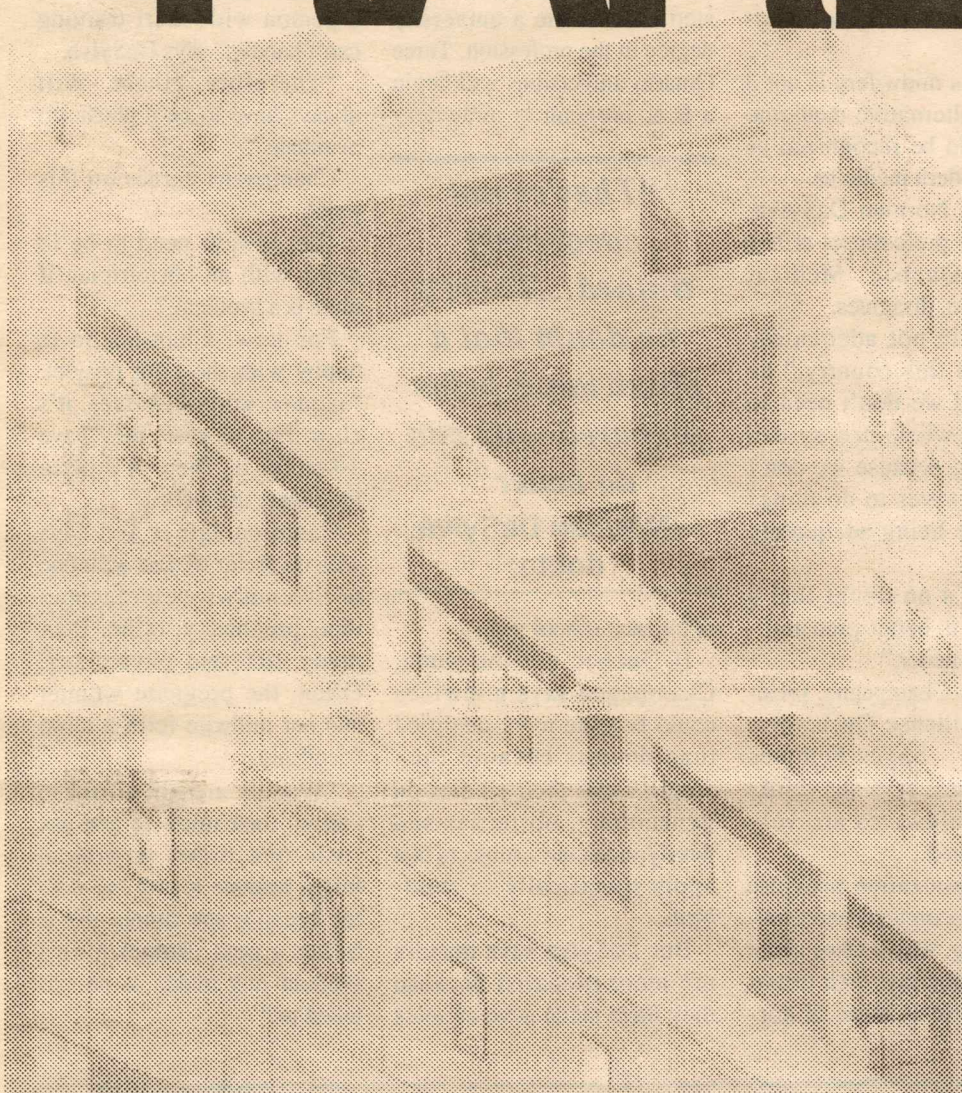
Due to the nature of our funding, we can accept submissions only from Concordia journalism students. But suggestions, comments, and letters to the editor are welcome from everyone.

Submissions and letters to the editor must be signed, and include a phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and submissions for space considerations.

The times and dates for staff meetings will be posted on the third floor of the Bryan Building (Loyola campus).

RARE AIR



The air in Concordia's new library is making staff and students sick. That's because the ventilation system is operating according to the outdated norms of the early 1980s. Poor air circulation is giving staff and students sick building syndrome.

BY MEGAN DURNFORD

High levels of carbon dioxide due to inadequate ventilation have been making people who work in the McConnell building sick since it opened in September, 1992.

"I've had a rash, sore eyes, a terrible headache, sore throat and extreme fatigue at the end of the day, to name a few problems," said adult education Professor Reva Heft, who has moved three times within the building attempting to relieve her symptoms.

"It was stuffy, no air. In the middle of the afternoon you started to feel dizzy, no energy," said graduate English department secretary Susan Brown. "The office was totally unworkable."

Brown said she contacted Karen Ward, of Concordia's Environmental Health and Safety Department, to investigate.

Ward found carbon dioxide levels often exceeded the North American standard of 1000 parts per million (ppm), sometimes reaching 1300 ppm in the English Department. Concentrations are highest on the buildings fifth and sixth floors and in the basement.

"The levels tend to get higher at the end of the day after more people have been breathing the same air. By three o' clock some people [illegible] like zombies," said Ward.

Exposure to high levels of carbon dioxide can cause sick building syndrome, which is characterized by stuffiness, headaches, dizziness, eye and respiratory irritation, shortness of breath, nausea and fatigue.

The reason for the bad air, according to Yves Gilbert of physical resources, is that the McConnell building was designed according to out-dated ventilation norms. Guidelines set in 1981, recommended 2.5 litres of fresh air a second per person to maintain carbon dioxide levels below 2,500 ppm. They were upgraded in 1989. The new norms require ventilation systems to provide 10 litres of fresh air a second per person to keep carbon dioxide levels below 1,000 ppm.

"Before construction began I advised the administration that we should design according to the new norms and consulting engineers on the project did a study to accomodate the new standards," said Gilbert. "But we couldn't get the approval of more funds from the Quebec Government."

He said it would have cost at least $1 million to adapt the plans and construct the building according to new ventilation standards.

"Quebec would not approve the changes because it was not Quebec law," said Gilbert.

Provincial law still follows the old 1981 guidelines.

McGill University and Université de Montréal are also using the old ventilation guidelines. But Ward said buildings at UQAM— Université de Québec à Montréal— were either built according to 1989 guidelines or brought up to date.

Until a permanent solution to the McConnell building's poor air is found, physical resources technician Stéphan Drolet will have to use his tricks to bring clean air into areas like the offices of the bookstore. "I can adjust air distribution in the building by playing with the thermostat because the system is automatically designed to supply more air when a heat source is detected," said Drolet.

Bookstore manager Lina Lipscombe feels that the air quality has improved lately, but Drolet worries that he won't be able to satisfy all the building's occupants. "But we are really at the edge now, I can't get much more air in," he said.

Ward said the number of complaints is decreasing. "Maybe it's because people are tired of complaining. We've done what we can for now, it's better but not great."

Physical resources is trying to maintain carbon dioxide levels below 1000 ppm, but Gilbert said very sensitive people can still have problems at 600 ppm.

Ward is particularly worried about this summer. "There is only a set amount of air coming in, so air we bring to one place has come from somewhere else. Floors seven to ten are still unoccupied. I don't know what is going happen when other departments move into their offices in the McConnell building."

Quebec midwives pushing for legalization

But some doctors concerned midwives inadequately trained

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

Recent talk of legalizing midwifery in Quebec is surrounded by controversy. Doctors say midwifery is unnecessary, but midwives say they are indispensable.

The controversy has drawn a lot of attention to the alternative method of childbirth.

Midwives have been assisting pregnant women for centuries. They originated in the days when a woman had no choice but to give birth at home.

And now, with the newest hospital technology available, many women are looking to tradition, and asking midwives to help them with their pregnancies.

Maggie Cameron, 43, is a midwife and a nurse living in Montreal. Originally from Scotland, she got her training at a midwifery college in England.

Though some provinces, such as Ontario, have legalized midwifery, Cameron says Canada is the only developed nation that does not have a legal, nationally standardized midwifery practice.

Like many midwives, Cameron says the Quebec government's approval of a midwife pilot project in Gatineau is a good start, but she wishes the government had gone all the way and legalized midwifery.

The Gatineau pilot project will run for five years. Referrals will be done by CLSCs and hospitals. Similar pilot projects are being considered for Lac St-Louis and Côte-des-Neiges CLSCs.

"We need some sort of structure, some up-to-date training. Sooner or later they will realize they can't manage without us"
—Maggie Cameron, midwife

"It's a step in the right direction," said Cameron. "But it could have been done better. We need some sort of structure, some up-to-date training so nothing is missing. Sooner or later they will realize they can't manage without us."

Cameron says a midwife assists the woman throughout her pregnancy, teaching her about pre-natal care and nutrition, and answering any questions.

She says midwifery is not a form of alternative medicine and should be recognized as part of modern medicine.

But Dr. Norman DaSylva, director of professional affairs at the Quebec Medical Association, disagrees.

"They're not adequately trained in this country," he said, "and we don't need to develop a whole new system of training because we don't need midwives to do things which are being adequately done now.

"There's no doubt that a physician is better prepared - we can do better."

Michèle Champagne, president of Alliance Quebécoise des Sages-Femmes Praticiennes, says she thinks today's midwives are very well prepared.

Her organization provides rigorous theoretical and clinical training, which takes about one year. She says their exams are the same as those of doctors. Yet their training is not recognized by the medical profession or the Quebec government.

Champagne says the next step is to create a university degree in the profession. Three Ontario universities will begin a B.A. program in midwifery in the next school year.

"They're not adequately trained...There's no doubt that a physician is better prepared—we can do better"
—Norman DaSylva, doctor

If Quebec did the same, Champagne says midwives could become more qualified than doctors because they would focus their studies on gynecology, obstetrics and family medicine - subjects that apply specifically to childbirth.

But DaSylva says doctors are more prepared because they have taken several years of training, and are ready for any medical emergency.

"Regardless of what you do, there will be unexpected complications during delivery that a person with short training can't handle," says DaSylva.

"Therefore, there will always have to be a physician available."

Champagne agrees on this point.

"We always need to be in touch with an obstetrician if there is a problem."

For now, Champagne is happy with the pilot project. "Women want midwives, it's clear. For 10 years they have asked for it. There is a place for choice in Quebec."

Cameron agrees and says women prefer to deal with one or two midwives throughout their pregnancy, rather than many different physicians. Often, the pregnant woman and her midwife form a close friendship.

"Women are not afraid to call up their midwife and ask little questions. A woman might hesitate to call her doctor because she thinks she is being a pest. Sometimes a woman just needs to be listened to."

Election saga ends finally with Dalton/Grimes victory

BY DOMINIQUE COFSKY

After "derogatory" remarks and disqualifications, election postponements and re-schedulings, court injunctions and candidate withdrawals, the CUSA co-presidential election roller coaster finally came to a halt last Thursday night.

Philip Dalton and Lana Grimes won with 67 per cent of the vote.

They had been disqualified from the election after Chief Returning Officer Lilyana Petrovic ruled that the team used " unsubstantiated and derogatory remarks" against other co-presidential teams. Dalton and Grimes then obtained a temporary court injunction which allowed them to be put back on the ballot.

However, Dalton and Grimes must now obtain a final injunction in order to officially be elected. If a judge rules against this injunction, election results will be nullified and another co-presidential election will have to be held.

Piper Huggins and Brad Lavigne came in second with 19 per cent of the vote, while Edouard Calliari and Santo Fata got 14 per cent of the vote.

David Parent and Margaret Seewalt dropped out of the race at the last minute, partly because of health reasons and partly to protest the court ruling which put Dalton and Grimes back on ballots.

New CUSA co-presidents, Philip Dalton and Lana Grimes.

THE MESSENGER FOCUS

Old malaria remedy resurrected in Africa

BY MEGAN DURNFORD

A joint venture between French and Chinese pharmaceutical companies means a new antimalarial drug, based on an ancient Chinese herbal remedy, will be available in four African countries next year.

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer, which has a long history of treating tropical diseases, will introduce the drug artemether, produced by China's Kunming Pharmaceutical Factory in Madagascar, Gabon, Togo, and Zaire.

The Chinese have known for 2,000 years that a tea brewed from the leaves and flowers of the Artemisia annua plant, or sweet wormwood, is an effective treatment for the chill and fever associated with malaria.

In 1972 Chinese scientists discovered the chemical structure of artemether. It wasn't until 1981 that the world learned of the development.

Artemether was found to fight all malaria parasites including those resistant to other antimalarial drugs.

In the 1950's the World Health Organization (WHO) began a global malaria eradication program. But faced with the rapid development of resistance to drugs for malaria, and to insecticides used against carrier mosquitoes, the WHO stopped the program in 1969.

Today, resistance to conventional malaria treatments is developing world-wide at an alarming rate, especially in Thailand, the Philippines, Columbia and Ecuador.

According to WHO figures, nearly 300 million people carry the malaria parasite, but more than 90 per cent of the carriers live in tropical Africa. The disease kills over one million people annually, most of whom are under the age of five.

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer is currently conducting clinical trials of artemether in other African countries, Asia and South America.

Dr. Nicolas White, an Oxford University professor of tropical medicine, is testing the drug in Vietnam and Thailand.

"Artemether is rapidly acting and so far there is no major toxicity associated with it. It is a major advance," said White.

The WHO is also conducting trials of the drug.

"Artemether seems to show promise for severe and complicated malaria," said Dr. Davidson of the WHO. "In comparison studies with conventional treatment for cerebral malaria [malaria that has infected the brain] we've found that children wake up faster and the parasites clear faster."

However, Davidson said it was not yet possible to determine if the drug can reduce the mortality rate for cerebral malaria which is currently between 20 and 50 per cent.

In late April, scientists from around the world will meet in Worcestshire, England, to discuss their results from the artemether tests.

"Most drugs become obsolete in five years and it takes 10 to 12 years to develop a drug so we've got to step lively," said Davidson. "There are not very many new malaria treatments in the pipeline."

Scientists warn against genetic research

BY MARYAM HENEIN

It is uncertain whether genetic engineering will prove beneficial or risky, and society should be aware of the consequences, according to medical experts.

"[Genetic manipulation] is one of those things society as a whole can decide on," says Jacky Boivin, a clinical psychologist at Concordia University. "We should know where we're going with it."

Please see Genetic, page 9

Montrealers shell out big bucks at Psychic fair

BY NEAL BURNHAM

Denis Ménard sat scribbling calculations on the ragged ear of a business card with a worn HB pencil.

"This year will be one of great change. And there will be a great move," he declared consulting his numerical table.

"We need more time. Why don't you make a $30 appointment. That will guarantee you at least an hour... yes?"

Financial planner? Cheap lawyer?

Not quite. Ménard is one of 126 psychics, clairvoyants, and merchants who came from across North America to sell everything from incense to insight at the 17th International ESP Expo which took place at Place Bonaventure March 12 to 14.

According to Ménard, he can predict future events using only a numeric table he designed himself, a birth date and a name.

"Everything follows the path of the planets. It's quite a simple science really."

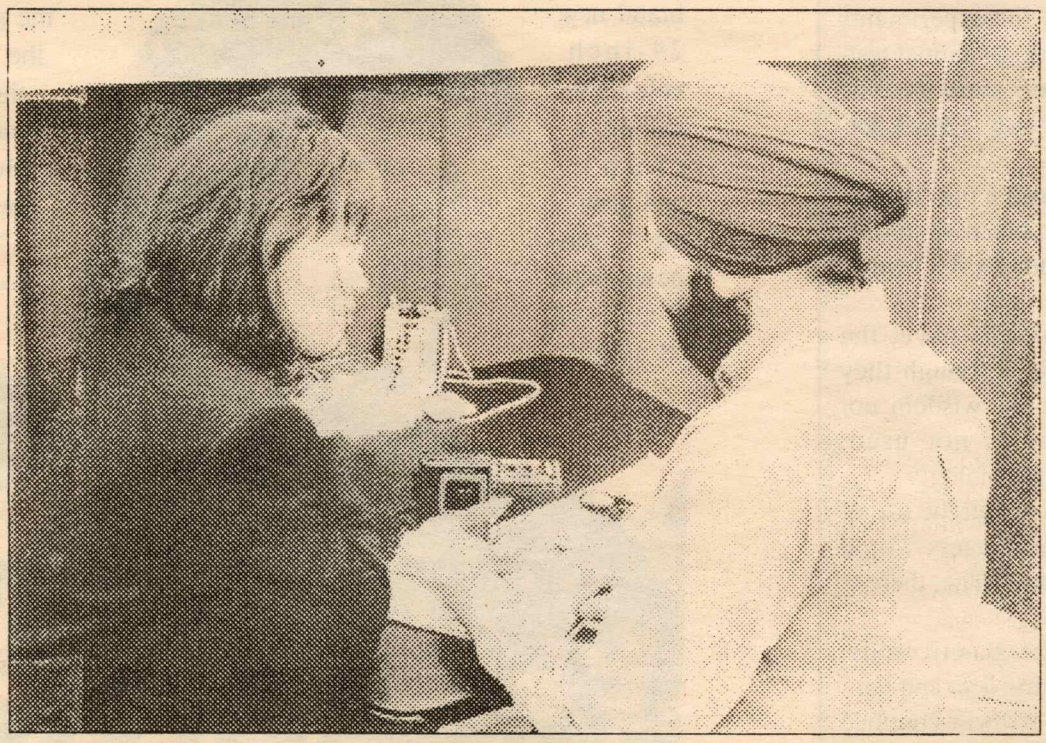


Photo by Brooke Gantham

A believer gets the low-down on her future from a palm reader at last week's Psych : Fair.

Whether it's science or superstition, you needed to flash between $30 and $80 to have a clairvoyant use anything from astrological charts, computers, magic crystals, magic beads, and of course, supernatural powers to see your future.

How do you know you're getting a bona fide psychic?

Student of spirituality Carla Hay said you have to be careful.

"There are some talented people here, but some of them are just offering cheap parlor tricks."

Organizer Normand St-Denis said people want a psychic who is sincere and willing to help.

"People come here looking for someone to talk with, to find hope and meaning."

And some people come to learn the tricks of the trade.

The Occult Shop offered everything you need to become a die-hard traditional psychic; "how to" books, strange knives and daggers, incense, crystals, and other jewelry.

Further on, American Mike Fedor of White Bear Designs sat behind his display of crystals and traditional native incense. Above him hung woven circles with feathers attached called dream catchers.

In Ojibway lore, the dream catcher would tangle bad dreams in its web so that only good dreams could filter through. The bad dream would perish in the first light of dawn.

"It's a nice idea," Fedor said, "but I think it's more psychological, like anything else here."

EDITORIAL

A pig is still a pig

Somewhere in North America, a pig is being raised with her heart altered so that it can one day be transplanted into a human being. Medical experts hope the process will eventually eliminate the shortage of donors for organ transplants. The pig is kept hidden, to protect it from animal rights groups.

Doctors have found a way to identify gene defects in embryos. This means expectant parents can check for inherited diseases such as muscular dystrophy, long before their child is born.

These accomplishments, which are trumpeted as the crowning glory of medical science, are really examples of our society's short-sightedness and conceit. We should do no more research into genetic engineering.

Any new technology has the potential to be beneficial, or destructive. But this does not mean knowledge is neutral. Nuclear physics brought the hope of a new energy source, but it also gave us the capability to destroy our entire planet. There were plusses and minuses to be sure, but in the end, our destructive capabilities were increased.

Decoding genes will prevent some children from living a life of suffering and pain. But, if they discover a gene which controls obesity, or intelligence, then people will be able to custom design their children. We would have the capability to design a "super-race" of genetically altered people.

And we are not content to modify ourselves. We dare to use other animals for experiments and spare parts. Leaving the issue of animal testing aside, genetic manipulation blurs the line between what is a person, and what is not a person.

A pig with a human heart is still a pig. But the distinction is not as clear if we breed an animal with an entire set of human innards. Or with a human face. Or a human brain.

Genetic engineers have, or will have, the power to twist and distort life as though they were gods. Society has neither the wisdom nor the laws to see this power is not used. Legislation always lags behind technology.

Even if laws were developed to ban the use of such knowledge, the potential dangers would still exist. Once we have the knowledge, there is no turning back.

We do not need to break the genetic code. Scientists are hell-bent on creating life, and conquering death. But in the end, we will continue to be born, to live, and to die. We do not need immortality.

People are not gods. When we look at where our research money is going, we should remember who on earth we are. Let people be people, and let pigs be pigs.

Patchen Barss

Who Will Play the Drum?

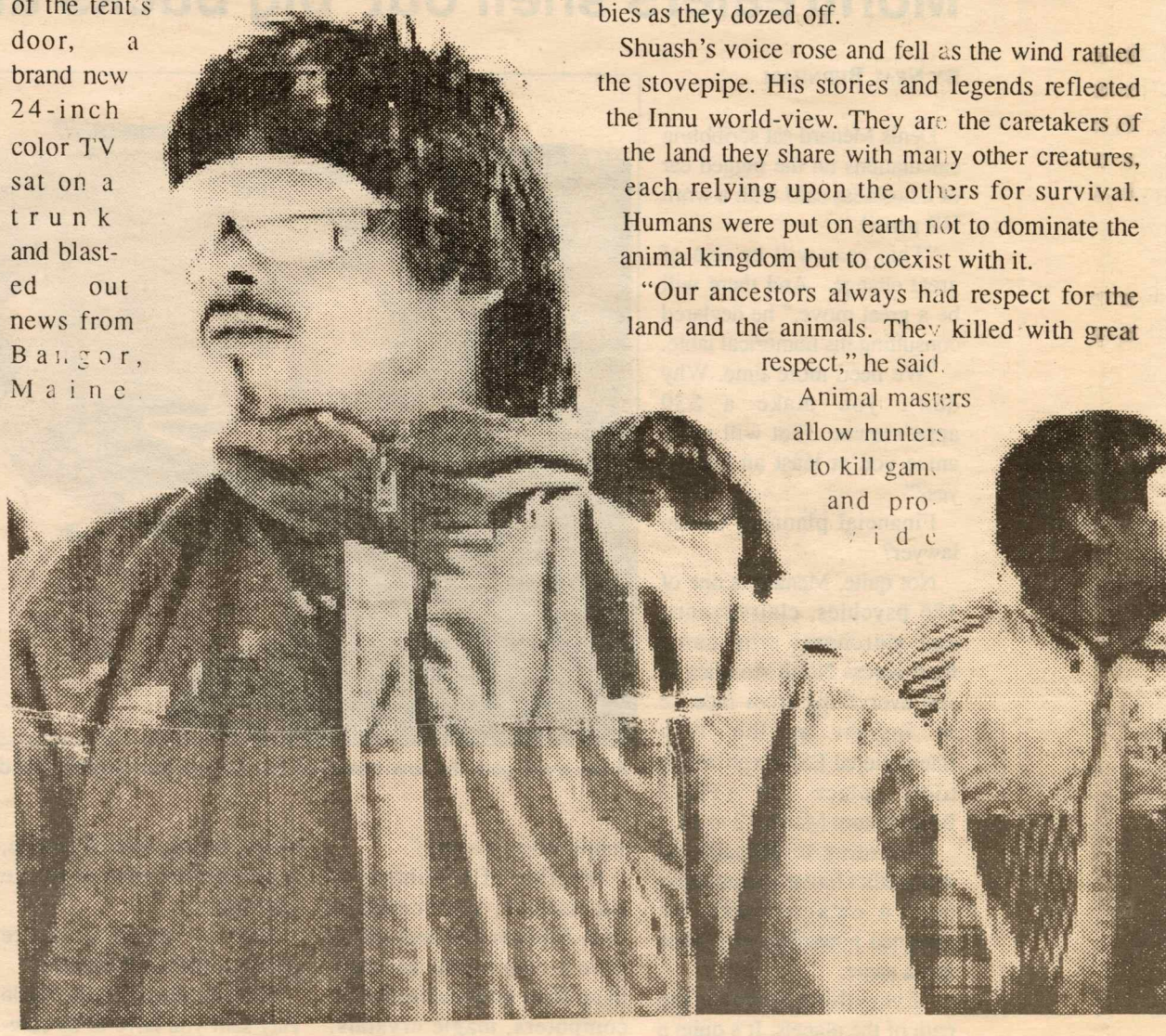
Traditional Innu culture confronts the tide of the twentieth century

BY CAMILLE FOUILLARD

I followed the extension cords, 11 in all, from Shuash's house through the metre-deep snow to the canvas tent among the spruce trees on the hill. I poked my head through the door. The heat struck me with the smell of burning hair and bone. I stepped in. Shuash's wife, Shanut, was changing the baby's disposable diaper. She pointed to a corner where I could sit on the fragrant floor of fir boughs.

This is Davis Inlet, Northern Labrador, April 1985.

On one side of the tent's door, a brand new 24-inch color TV sat on a trunk and blasted out news from Bangor, Maine.



Through the opening, I could see the last breaths of sunset color the sky and water across the bay a deep rose. And on the other side of the door, a small stove crackled with burning wood. Beside it, a caribou head roasting on a skewer stared me in the face. Shuash leaned over, carved out the animal's cheek, and popped the flesh in his mouth.

"We don't waste any part of the caribou," he said.

I declined offers of the beast's eyes or brain. But I relished Shuash's gift of stories over a cup of strong tea, the TV finally silenced. Shanut put the children down for the evening, singing lullabies as they dozed off.

Shuash's voice rose and fell as the wind rattled the stovepipe. His stories and legends reflected the Innu world-view. They are the caretakers of the land they share with many other creatures, each relying upon the others for survival. Humans were put on earth not to dominate the animal kingdom but to coexist with it.

"Our ancestors always had respect for the land and the animals. They killed with great respect," he said.

Animal masters allow hunters to kill game and provide

food for their families. Animals cannot be hunted without their cooperation. To gain the animal spirits' favor, a hunter must show respect by keeping the bones of hunted animals from harm, sharing the kill, and disposing of remains properly, such as placing animal fat and leftovers in the fire. If the Innu fail to follow these and other rules, the animal masters are said to become angry and punish the offending persons.

This is how many Innu explain a house fire that killed six children in February 1992: the animal spirits were angry.

One elder, Tshenish, explained the tragedy and others like it in this way: "All people used to respect the animals. Every part of the animal is important. The skull has to be hung on the tree. At my age now, I have seen so many caribou bones being thrown away outside the house. The dogs eat the bones. It really hurts me to see these things happen. This is how so many bad things happen to us. We can't blame all our problems on alcohol. We have to blame ourselves, too, for not taking care of the caribou bones."

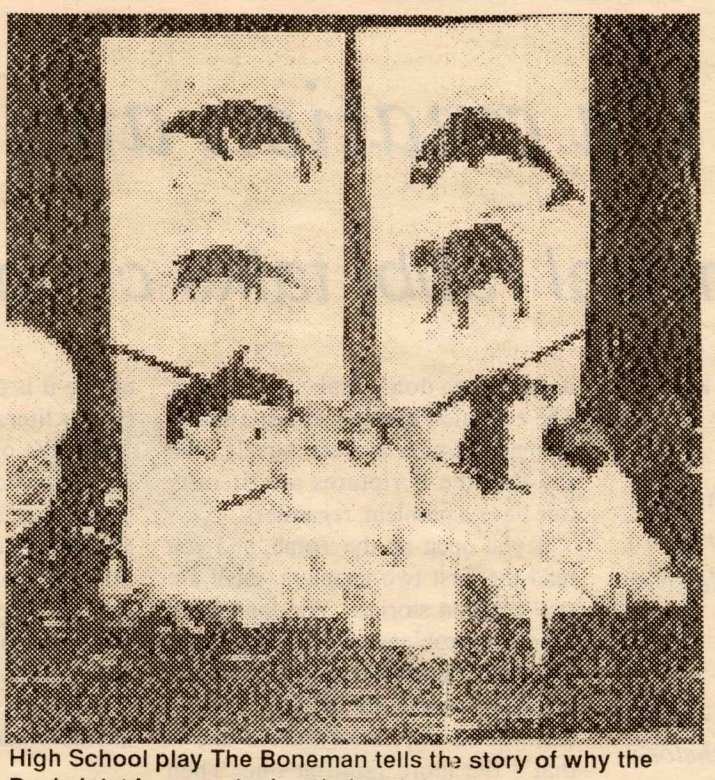
The Innu's culture and religion, their economic and social organization, their skills, their conversations, their health, their self-worth, are all rooted in the land and their relationships with the caribou and other animals. David Suzuki says the Innu know their "relatives," the animals, far more extensively than do Western scientists. The Innu understand the whole environment, not just one species of animal or flora, he says.

"In speaking with the elders, I was impressed by the breadth and scale of their knowledge," Suzuki wrote in *Wisdom of the Elders*. "They are the repositories of generations of observations and insights essential for their survival... Yet, Innu observations are discounted as anecdotal and folkloric, less credible than those of 'experts.'"

Because almost no environmental scientists work in Labrador, the Innu worry no one can represent their interests when governments and industry make decisions that may have an enviromental impact.

Davis Inlet chief Katie Rich says Innu elders are the local experts.

"The elders don't have high school or university education, but they know all there is to know to survive in the country. Like the experts in your culture, the elders use words which the younger generation doesn't understand. These words hold a specialized knowledge."



High School play The Boneman tells the story of why the Davis Inlet Innu are losing their culture.

Rich fears the knowledge will disappear when the elders die. She worries that many children have lost respect for the old ways and laugh at the stories.

The community still has four drummers, elders who beat pulsing and chant songs until falling into trances in which they perceive the location of animals to be hunted.

But after the elders go, who will play the drum?

"That is a problem," Rich said, pausing to think.

"It scares me that I have so little knowledge. The elders are speaking to my brother, other young men, but they are only beginning to talk about these things. There is only so much time left. We also have to be ready to learn."

The Innu cannot go back in time, Rich said, but must work to keep what they have. She pointed out some rituals, such as the sweat lodge, have been revived and others such as the *Mukushan*, or feast of the caribou, have always thrived.

I was at a *Mukushan* last year, again a guest in Shuash's tent.

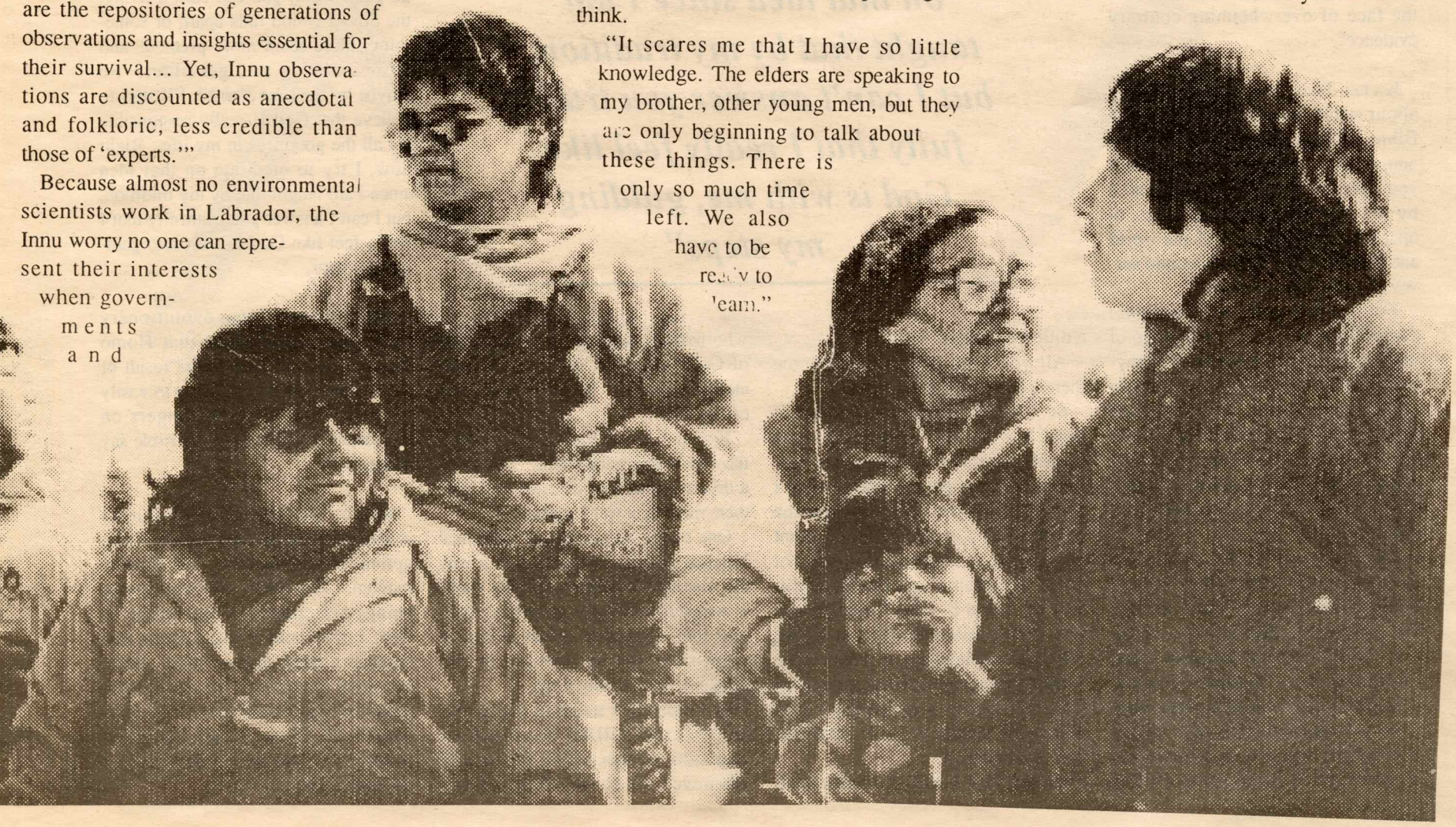
The ceremony begins with the crushing and boiling of caribou bones. Shanut helps serve the *pimin* - bone marrow that rises to the top of the broth - along with stewed meat and steaming bannock, first to the elders in the community, then the men, women, and children, in that order.

Shanut's portion to me is generous. The *pimin* is the sacred food of the subsistence culture. I could live on this alone. I eat slowly what feels like a half pound of butter. I am careful not to waste any.

Shuash laughs when I return my plate, says he's never seen anyone eat so much *pimin* in one sitting. He wipes my plate with a napkin and throws it in the fire.

"Innu policies," he says with a sardonic smile.

There is no drum at this *mukushan*. Maybe next year.



On creation and evolution

A Montreal rabbi talks candidly about Judaism

BY LAWRENCE NYVEEN

Rabbi Kenneth Katz came to Montreal in 1989 to preside over Beth-El congregation in the Town of Mount Royal. Born Feb. 7, 1956, in Glen Ridge, N.J., he obtained a bachelor's degree in Latin literature from the University of Chicago and a master's degree in rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Aside from his rabbinical duties, Katz continues to pursue a Ph.D. in ancient Jewish history at the same institution.

MESSENGER: How do you deal with the question of literal interpretation of the Bible, for example creationism, in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence?

KATZ: There's a basic confusion about what genre of literature the Bible is, both among religious and non-religious people. You're aware if you open up the Bible that's shared by the Jews and the Christians, it opens with the creation of the world and then proceeds through a rapid survey of early human history.

You notice right off that this doesn't jibe with the discoveries of modern geology or cosmology or anything else and this was even fairly obvious in antiquity. By 2,000 years ago, people had noticed that in the ancient Near East there were different people with different stories, "mythological past" stories, that didn't all square up.

There are some people who, either on principle or because they haven't thought about it very hard, assume that it's history, that is, it's a narrative. But for several thousand years, there have been readers—Jewish, Christian, pagan, Muslim—who have been dissatisfied with that, either because the narrative is inconsistent or contradicts itself, or is full of details that don't make any sense. The evolution question is just a subset of that question and the people who say that the Scriptures are literally true have a problem, regardless.

If you open up the Torah, and you read the first two chapters, there are two creation stories. We don't even need the problem of evolution here. Just read Genesis chapter one where the story unfolds on the first day, on the second day, on the third day—that's the more familiar one. Then open chapter two, which starts with a completely different order, with a completely different arrangement and a different point of view.

All you need is the text to know there's a problem here.

So what do the people who say it isn't history do? Speaking very broadly--because we're putting into the same camp people who wouldn't want to be lumped together—what the Scriptures are, according to this point of view, are a collection of stories that make arguments and claims about how the world is, what human beings are, what's valuable and important. And that explanation is a nice one, whether you believe it was written by God or whether you believe it was written by people or some combination of inspiration.

Maybe God wrote the Scriptures, maybe it is a literal account, maybe it isn't a literal account, but we're all Jews. We organize our lives by reading these stories, seeing ourselves in these stories. That's really a traditional outlook. And this insistence, this rigid insistence on the veracity, that it's like journalism, is really an impoverished way of reading. If that's your only question when you approach the Scriptures, you're missing the whole point.

MESSENGER: Time magazine recently devoted an issue to scientists who believe they can reveal the hand of God behind the order of the subatomic universe. What do you think of this claim?

KATZ: I think that's silly. That's the watchmaker argument. You're on a desert island, you discover a watch, there must be a watchmaker.

One of the arguments of rabbinical Judaism is that the world is in a way the watchmaker argument. The world is so overpoweringly gorgeous, complex and admirably suited to human enjoyment that by reveling in this pleasure, we discover God.

The rabbinical tradition makes this argument by telling us to make a statement to that effect practically whenever we do anything—that's called a bracha, or blessing. Whenever you eat a piece of bread, smell a flower, or see an incredible human accomplishment like this little Sony tape recorder on the desk here, or live television coming from the planet Neptune, or Magic Johnson sinking an incredible shot, the rabbis teach that you make this statement that says, in effect, "There's a God who set up the world in such a way, isn't that amazing."

MESSENGER: What role does God play in life?

KATZ: The ancient rabbis teach us that God is active in the world all the time. This is a difficult idea to accept and I'm reluctant to get religiously excited if things that are important in my life work out just right.

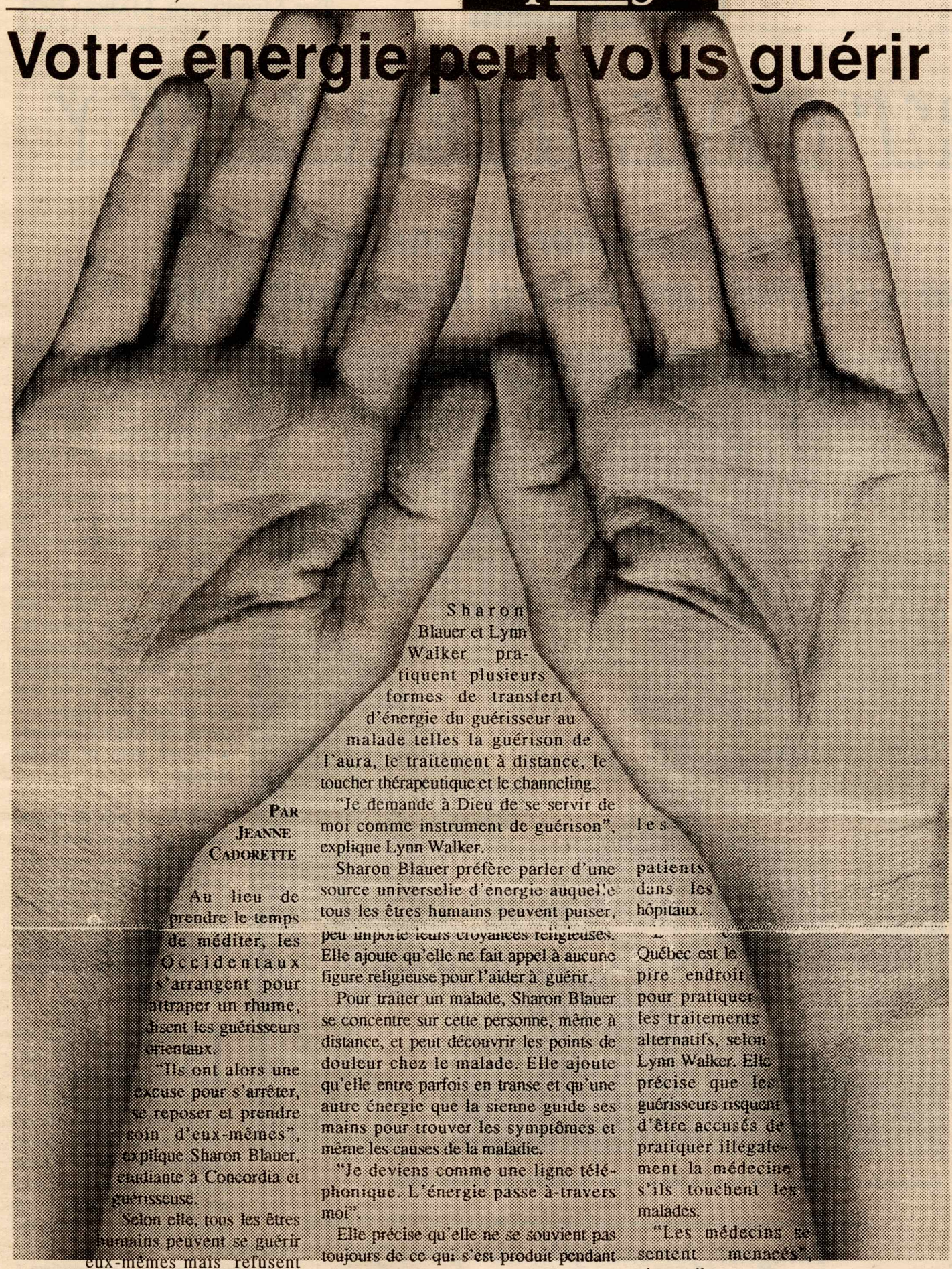
I'd like you to ask me this question again in 10 years. I'm 37, and as more and more trouble accumulates in my life, I find that when important things go right, your children are healthy, your marriage works out, you have a good job and hold on to it, you do good work, you can earn a living, the Soviet Union falls apart, or something, these seem more precious and more amazing as I get older. So maybe by the time I'm 47, I'll start to believe that God is really responsible for all the goodness in my life. Right now, I try to meditate on that idea since I am taught that by my tradition, but I can't answer you truthfully that I really feel like God is with me, guiding my steps.

MESSENGER: Some evolutionary biologists would argue that Homo sapiens' evolved form is the result of a fluke and that we could just as easily have six limbs or eight fingers on each hand. What would the Bible say about this?

KATZ: The theory of evolution seems plausible to me—it seems like optimized randomness. The form is random. The Torah says that human beings are created in the image of God. I don't believe that it means that God has a body, like we have. There are other properties we have—the power of reason, the power of compassion, the power of hate, the power of speech. These are the ways that we resemble God.

"... maybe by the time I'm 47, I'll start to believe that God is really responsible for all the goodness in my life. Right now, I try to meditate on that idea since I am taught that by my tradition, but I can't answer you truthfully that I really feel like God is with me, guiding my steps"

Votre énergie peut vous guérir



Sharon Blauer et Lynn Walker pratiquent plusieurs formes de transfert d'énergie du guérisseur au malade telles la guérison de l'aura, le traitement à distance, le toucher thérapeutique et le channeling.

PAR JEANNE CADORETTE

Au lieu de prendre le temps de méditer, les Occidentaux s'arrangent pour attraper un rhume, disent les guérisseurs orientaux.

"Ils ont alors une excuse pour s'arrêter, se reposer et prendre soin d'eux-mêmes", explique Sharon Blauer, étudiante à Concordia et guérisseuse.

Selon elle, tous les êtres humains peuvent se guérir eux-mêmes mais refusent inconsciemment leur propre guérison.

"Si quelqu'un ne croit pas à la possibilité de guérison ou veut continuer à être malade pour attirer l'attention, il ne peut être guéri", ajoute-elle.

Sharon Blauer explique que l'être humain est composé d'un corps et d'un champ d'énergie appelé aura. La maladie se manifeste d'abord dans le champ d'énergie de l'individu avant qu'apparaissent les symptômes physiques de la maladie.

Selon Lynn Walker, infirmière pendant 30 ans et maintenant guérisseuse à temps plein, la douleur résulte d'un champ magnétique endommagé.

"Je demande à Dieu de se servir de moi comme instrument de guérison", explique Lynn Walker.

Sharon Blauer préfère parler d'une source universelle d'énergie auquel tous les êtres humains peuvent puiser, peu importe leurs croyances religieuses. Elle ajoute qu'elle ne fait appel à aucune figure religieuse pour l'aider à guérir.

Pour traiter un malade, Sharon Blauer se concentre sur cette personne, même à distance, et peut découvrir les points de douleur chez le malade. Elle ajoute qu'elle entre parfois en transe et qu'une autre énergie que la sienne guide ses mains pour trouver les symptômes et même les causes de la maladie.

"Je deviens comme une ligne téléphonique. L'énergie passe à-travers moi".

Elle précise qu'elle ne se souvient pas toujours de ce qui s'est produit pendant la séance de traitement puisqu'une énergie plus forte que la sienne agit à-travers elle pour guérir le patient.

"En transe, certaines personnes peuvent voir l'aura du malade", ajoute Sharon Blauer.

Elle explique que le guérisseur peut alors détruire l'énergie négative de l'aura et guérir ou même prévenir la maladie.

La médecine traditionnelle reconnaît peu à peu les vertus du traitement par transfert d'énergie. L'Université de Montréal enseigne aux infirmières le toucher thérapeutique. Les guérisseurs britanniques, membres de la fédération nationale des guérisseurs, peuvent traiter les patients dans les hôpitaux.

Québec est le pire endroit pour pratiquer les traitements alternatifs, selon Lynn Walker. Elle précise que les guérisseurs risquent d'être accusés de pratiquer illégalement la médecine s'ils touchent les malades.

"Les médecins se sentent menacés", ajoute-elle.

Pourtant, le traitement par transfert d'énergie peut compléter la médecine traditionnelle en soignant la cause de la maladie tout autant que ses symptômes, explique Sharon Blauer.

"Il y a une raison pour laquelle vous êtes malade. Il faut essayer de la trouver et de s'en débarasser", ajoute-elle.

Sharon Blauer espère que le recours au traitement par transfert d'énergie n'est pas une mode passagère.

"Il y a trop de cancer, de sida dans le monde. On ne peut pas ignorer cette façon de guérir".

Genetic engineering embroiled in heated controversy

Continued from p. 5

June Goodfield, author of Playing God, Genetic Engineering and the Manipulation fo Life defines recombinant DNA as DNA taken from one organism and spliced into DNA from another to create something absolutely new: new living molecules, new genes, and therefore new life."

"There are different kinds of manipulation," says Dr. Margaret Somerville, director at the Mcgill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. There are genetic changes which affect only one person, called a stem-cell line, and changes which affect all the person's descendants, a germ-cell line.

Skills in human embryo manipulation are improving, said Daryl Macer, a bioethics consultant at the Institute of Biological Sciences at the University of Tsukuba in Japan. At this rate it will not be long before we can efficiently modify embryos.

This means genetic diseases such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis can be diagnosed and cured at the embryonic stage.

In a report two years ago, Macer said research should be postponed until society can agree on "the time and developmental limits of human embryo experimentation."

McGill medicine professor Benjamin Freedman, studies are limited mainly to diagnosing cancer and fatal gene mutations.

"Science is very malleable to social pressure," says Freedman. "It's very questionable whether society has the will to control problems on genetic matters."

VIRTUAL REALITY

The new computer technology some scientists are calling Electronic LSD

BY SANDRA BLAIKIE

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to take a stroll on the planet Mars?

What about walking through a prehistoric jungle with a pterodactyl flying overhead?

Your wildest dreams are about to become a reality - a virtual reality.

Virtual reality (VR), an evolving computer technology, allows the user to enter and interact with an artificial, three-dimensional computer-generated world.

And it is expected to become a fixture in most North American homes within ten years, taking its place beside televisions, VCRs and computers, according to a research scientist at Ville St-Laurent's CAE Electronics.

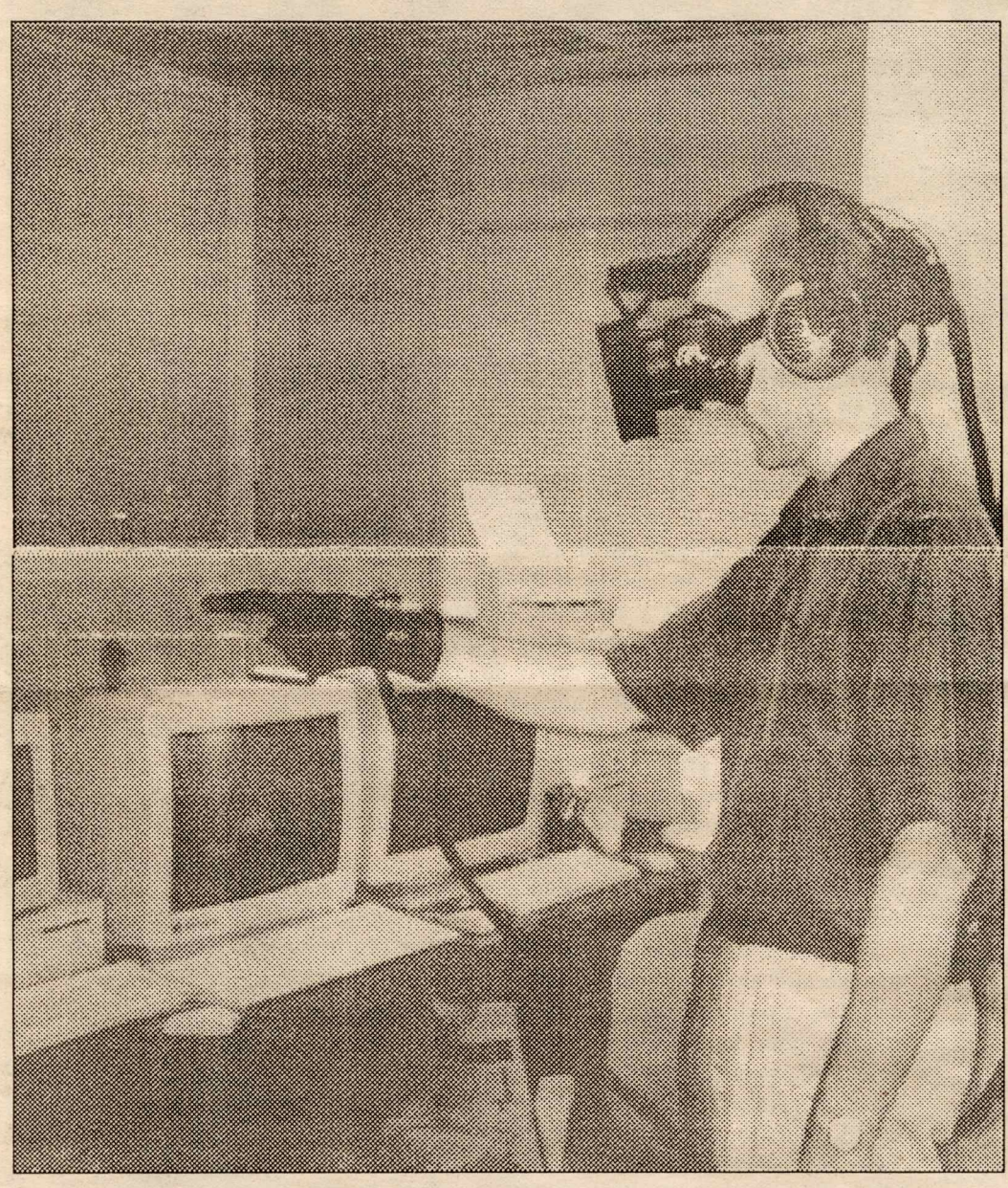
Brian Welch, a VR expert, believes we are witnessing the dawn of a brave new world of computer-generated imagery. He is one of a handful of North American researchers working to advance the new technology.

"I expect this will be much like the phenomenon of television, when it was introduced. Eventually everyone will use it. It is far too powerful a tool to be ignored. The applications are endless."

VR is already an irreplaceable training tool for the Canadian Air Force. Pilots regularly strap themselves into a cockpit mock-up to fly simulated missions at a CAE laboratory full of VR equipment.

By donning a helmet which places two small computer monitors in front of each eye, the pilot receives information from a powerful computer through a thick fibre-optic cable.

The pilots fly across a virtual sky. The images on the monitors exist only as formulae in the computers. But they are more than convincing. Welch said some pilots have been led from the room sweating and shaking after simulated crashes, virtual bombings and run-ins with computer-generated enemy aircraft.



Concordia Professor Hal Twaites steps into a computer-generated world.

"Imagine, for example, how powerful this could be for teachers. You wouldn't have to open a book to study ancient China, you could go there—you could take your whole class there"

"The environment is complete and convincing. Once you've entered it, it's often difficult to remember that it isn't real," Welch said.

Since VR research first began in 1982 at NASA, the technology has spawned an ever-growing industry.

Some advanced VR systems include a helmet, transmitting sights and sounds to the user, as well as a glove which allows the user to touch and interact with the simulated environment. VR bodysuits, which literally immerse the user in the virtual world, are now in development.

But right now, even basic VR technology is dazzling and entertaining the general public.

Children are entering virtual worlds at New York arcades. Japanese homemakers stroll through representations of their newly-designed kitchens, even before the first tile has been laid. Doctors are perfecting surgical methods with the help of virtual patients.

All this is only the beginning, according to Welch.

"Imagine, for example, how powerful this could be for teachers. You wouldn't have to open a book to study ancient China, you go there—you could take your whole class there."

But some critics see problems with this vision of the future. VR has been described by detractors as "electronic LSD." Some see the virtual future as one with very little human interaction—just people hooked up to their VR units, "zoned out" from the real world.

But Welch dismisses the criticism.

"This cannot be undone. We have taken computers to the next logical step. Virtual reality offers us a whole new way of relating to the world. You will always have those who see it as dangerous. Any new technology is seen as dangerous by a certain segment of the population."

Just in case you were wondering, a VR system for your home will set you back anywhere from $600,000 to over $1 million.

But CAE hopes to offer a cheaper system to the public by the year 2000. Brian Welch is one of several scientists working to bring the cost down.

Video images playing key role in art

BY RITA KOTZIA

Video images have taken on a new dimension in two exhibits now showing at the Galerie Arts Technologiques .

The show "Still Movement," by Montreal artist Gregory P. Garvey is a multi-media display combining video with sound and computer distortion.

Garvey's exhibit consists of six digital portraits and three videos, Assumption of Everyday Motions", "Terrain" and "Blue Dance" .

"Assumption"shows clippings of the Gulf War contrasted with images of people continuing their daily activities. With the help of choreographers, "Terrrain" and "Blue Dance" incorporate body movement as a means of expression.

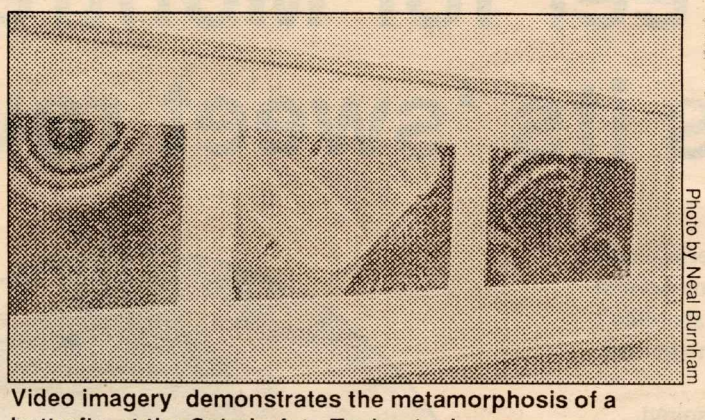


Photo by Neal Burnham

Video imagery demonstrates the metamorphosis of a butterfly at the Galerie Arts Technologiques.

Garvey tries to show unity within the vast diversity of human life. His images range from a hard-core couple with a skull and chains insignia to surfers posing on a beach in a lush sea of colors.

Richard Garneau's "Diapause" allows us to see the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. Details have been blown-up on 13 boards. Through computer manipulation and jet-inking of his work, Garneau focuses on an ever-changing chrysalis and uses rich tones of red, gold, turquoise, and violet.

A soothing soundscape intensifies the enjoyment of Garneau's interpretation of the birth of the butterfly.

Garneau and Garvey have extensive backgrounds in computer and designing graphics. Computer graphics enable them to make concrete shapes out of abstract musings. Garneau teaches at Université de Montréal and Garvey at Concordia University.

Galerie Arts Technologiques is in the Centre Copie-Art at 813 Ontario East.

RECORDING ROUNDUP

It's all in the metal

BY ANDREW BERNSTEIN

Velcro Soul: Hurt Them a Little (Independent)

Forever struggling, Montreal hardcore bands continue to be productive whether there's an audience for their music or not.

Velcro Soul specializes in briskly energetic hardcore punk with a smattering of melody.

This is not ordinary, garden-variety hardcore, though. On average, there are more than two riffs per song—and the songs have richly-articulated, complex structures. These qualities set Velcro Soul apart from the rest of the three-chord, who-cares-if-I-can-play school of early 1980's scumrock revisionism. The intricacy of these songs doesn't keep them from being catchy.

There is a live feel to Hurt Them A Little's nine songs. The listening experience has an air of a concert rather than a recording. This is commendable. But the drums and vocals are too dry and the sound has too much low frequency.

Marc-André Gagnon's bass playing is of particular interest. Guitarist-vocalist Dave MacIntyre, a Concordia student, has a sometimes overly-dry and staccato delivery of the words. But his penchant for shtick and sharp wit is a winner in the end.

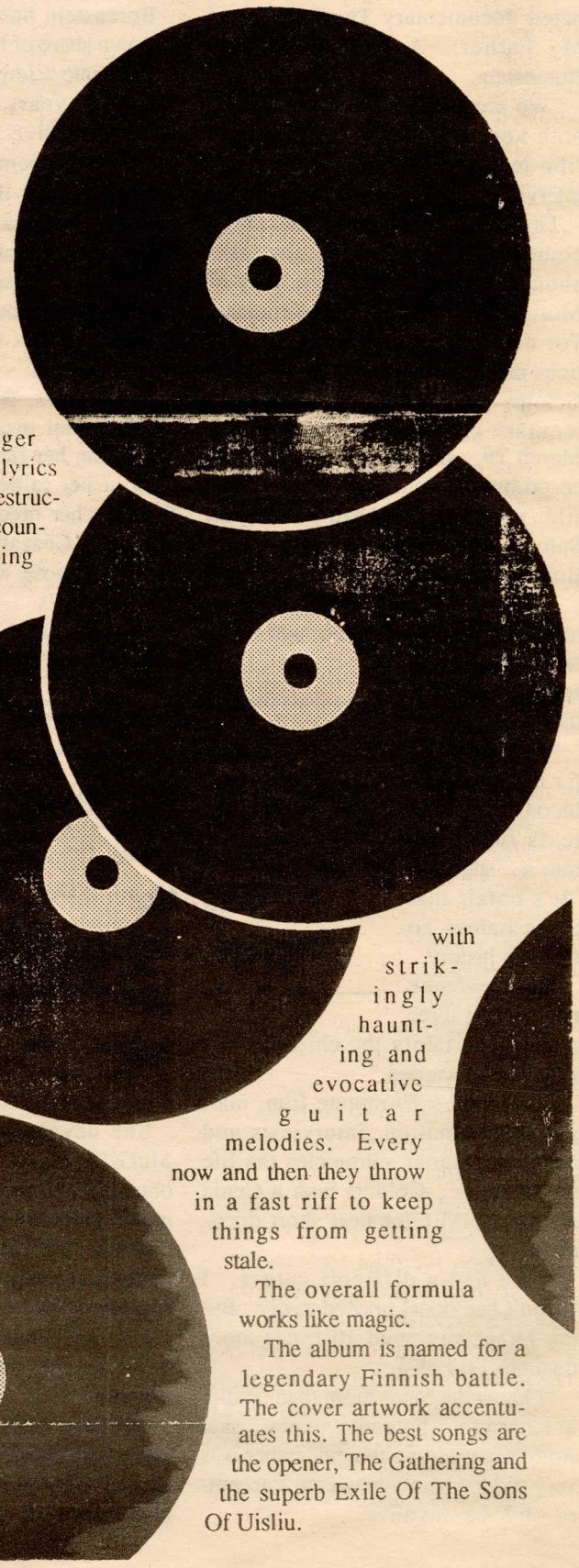
Amorphis: The Karelian Isthmus (Nuclear Blast)

On a less local front is some new death metal from Finland. For the uninitiated, death metal is a sub-genre of heavy metal based on extremes. The singer growls (or vomits) out lyrics about war, death and destruction. The Scandinavian countries have been producing excellent death metal bands in the past few years and Amorphis is no exception.

Amorphis' main modus operandi is to play slow, punishing riffs and mix them up with strikingly haunting and evocative guitar melodies. Every now and then they throw in a fast riff to keep things from getting stale.

The overall formula works like magic.

The album is named for a legendary Finnish battle. The cover artwork accentuates this. The best songs are the opener, The Gathering and the superb Exile Of The Sons Of Uisliu.



Difficult career for Montreal film-maker has its 'sweet reward'

BY MARIA DAMIANO

Animation film-maker Joyce Borenstein says that unlike her extroverted, charismatic father, she is a shy person.

But in many ways she and her father, a Lithuanian-born immigrant to Montreal who painted until his death in 1969, are similar. He is the focus of her Academy Award nominated documentary The Colours of My Father: A Portrait of Sam Borenstein.

"We are both very emotional and both very stubborn," the Montreal film-maker said in a late-February interview.

That emotion and stubbornness come out when Borenstein talks about the rules of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For documentaries, Oscar nominations and awards go to producers. If Colours wins in the best short documentary category in Los Angeles March 29, statuettes will go to the co-producers, independent Montreal film producer Richard Elson and Sally Bochner of the National Film Board.

Borenstein said the two producers have told her that she, too, will be up on stage to say a few words, but that's all.

"It's not the producers' blood, sweat and tears that went into it," she said. "It's unfair that those names go down in history.

"It's a shame there aren't three prizes – certainly the chief creator should be rewarded."

Borenstein's 29-minute film, integrating animation, interviews and archival material, chronicles the life of her father. Colours won a Genie Award in 1991 for best short documentary.

"I've had a difficult career. I haven't had doors opened easily. But my father struggled 10 times more than me," she said.

"I know the ropes more than he did, in terms of hooking into money," said Borenstein, adding that her father was very sad his paintings weren't accepted while he was alive.

But the Concordia University animation teacher, who has won several awards for her films, said she didn't want to focus Colours on the sad parts of her father's life.

"I want people to feel inspired, to show them that a human being can turn things around," she said. "My father showed me you could do great things and overcome obstacles."

Borenstein has overcome her own share of hardships.

Born into a Jewish family about 40 years ago (she refuses to give her exact age), Borenstein said she never fit into the anglophone or francophone milieu of Montreal.

She, her twin sister and her brother were brought up with classical music, fine arts, and no television.

In Colours, Borenstein tells viewers that instead of watching television, her family would sit and look at her father's paintings. Her father is her favorite artist. But she also likes Chagall, Picasso and other painters whose work resembles that of her father's.

Borenstein said she was embarrassed as a child because her family was different. She wanted to be "normal" and blend in with other children.

"For me, animation is the synthesis of all the arts, the ultimate art form"

"But I had an incredible father. I wouldn't want it any different now," she said.

Growing up in a cultured family, Borenstein said she always knew she had visual and musical talent.

She developed those talents at McGill University where she obtained a bachelor of arts degree in music, literature and film in 1971.

From 1972 to 1974, Borenstein studied animation at the California Institute of the Arts.

"For me, animation is the synthesis of all the arts, the ultimate art form," she said.

She came back to Montreal and has been with the National Film Board, on and off, for 16 years. Borenstein also teaches design at the University of Quebec at Montreal and illustrates children's books.

Joyce Borenstein

Bochner said the NFB got involved with Colours about three years ago because of Borenstein's unusual approach in making the documentary. Borenstein's achievements with the NFB and the NFB's expertise in animation also helped pilot the project. Animated NFB productions have won four previous Oscars.

Borenstein said she spent 6,000 hours animating, writing and directing Colours.

"The rules of the Academy are the rules of the Academy," Bochner said in a recent telephone interview. "But there is no doubt that Joyce is the creative force behind the film."

"It's not the producers' blood, sweat and tears that went into it. It's unfair that those names go down in history"

"I got left out (of the nominations) even though it's very much my film," Borenstein said. "You couldn't get more personal.

"But if I lived in Los Angele I would be working at Disney," she concedes, noting that Canadian fi m-makers have more freedom to m ke personal films than do American film-makers.

She now has several projects, mostly with the NFB, in the works.

Borenstein has been in Los Angeles since March 24. And whether she wins or loses March 29, the film's nomination alone is "a sweet reward," she said with a smile.

The Colours of My Father: A portrait of Sam Borenstein is available on videocassette at the NFB library, 1564 St. Denis St. For more information, call 283-4823.